



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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29 March 2006

### IDN101031.E

Indonesia: The largest centres of Chinese Indonesian population; reports of attacks in these areas and protection available; whether some areas of Indonesia are considered more welcoming than others to Chinese Indonesians (2004 - 2006)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on which areas of Indonesia are home to the largest concentrations of Chinese Indonesians was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Between 1930 and 1999, no census took into account the ethnicity of the Indonesian population (*Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* Apr. 2005, 97). The 2000 census, however, does provide information on ethnicity, although the data on Chinese Indonesians is "severely flawed," according to Jamie Mackie (*ibid.*), a professor emeritus at Australian National University (ASSA n.d.). In the 2000 census, many Chinese Indonesians reportedly did not self-identify due to fears related to the 1998 race riots (*ibid.*, 100; see also *The Economist* 4 Feb. 2006). In an article in the *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Mackie stated that, "whether the non-reporting Chinese numbered only a small proportion or vastly more in any region, or nationally, is quite unknown and unknowable" (Apr. 2005, 100). In the article, Mackie also referred to the 2000 census data as reported by Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin and Aris Ananta in their 2003 book, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape* (*Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* Apr. 2005, 100). The census reportedly showed that the ethnic Chinese made up one of the eight largest ethnic groups in eleven of the thirty Indonesian provinces (*Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies* Apr. 2005, 100). Fifteen per cent of the total number of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia lived in the remaining nineteen provinces (*ibid.*). Further information on the 2000 census, including a breakdown of the Chinese Indonesian population by province, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The *Encyclopedia of Diasporas* reported that, in 2004, areas referred to as "Chinatown" could still be found in most cities in Indonesia (2004, 801). A 26 January 2006 Agence France-Presse (AFP) article pointed out that members of the ethnic Chinese community in Indonesia could be found "scattered across" the country. The city of Medan on Sumatra island is "unique" in Indonesia, according to *The Straits Times*, because, in 2004, ethnic Chinese made up 20 per cent of the city's population (*Straits Times* 28 Feb. 2004), while Chinese Indonesians made up only between 1.5 per cent and 4 per cent of the total Indonesian population (*ibid.*; Dow Jones International News 20 Jan. 2004; *The Economist* 4 Feb. 2006, *The Straits Times* 3 Feb. 2006). An AFP article described Medan as "the bastion of ethnic Chinese on Sumatra island" (5 Apr. 2005). Elsewhere on Sumatra, Bangka Belitung is home to Chinese Indonesians who make their living

as hawkers, farm hands and labourers (*Straits Times* 3 Feb. 2006). In northern Sumatra, less than five per cent of the population is Chinese, although the local economy is largely sustained by Chinese businesses (*The Wall Street Journal Europe* 9 Feb. 2005). In Banda Aceh, Chinese Indonesians own between 50 and 70 per cent of businesses (ibid.) and, according to AFP, they have lived in that part of Aceh province in relative peace for decades (5 Apr. 2005).

Chinese Indonesians can also be found in unspecified numbers in West Kalimantan (*The Straits Times* 3 Feb. 2006), including in Pontianak where, according to *The Jakarta Post*, Chinese culture has been retained (28 Jan. 2006), and on the northern coast of Java, where Chinese immigrants settled in the 1400s (ibid.). North and West Jakarta are populated predominantly by Chinese Indonesians, *The Straits Times* reported (3 Feb. 2006). *The Encyclopedia of Diasporas* pointed out that the northern part of Jakarta, known as Glodok, is dominated by the Chinese (2004, 801).

Information on whether some areas of Indonesia are considered more welcoming than others to Chinese Indonesians could not be found among the sources consulted. However, a 9 February 2005 article in *The Wall Street Journal Europe* article remarked that "thousands" of Chinese Indonesians affected by the 26 December 2004 tsunami in Aceh province sought refuge in Medan and Jakarta.

For information on reports of attacks on Chinese Indonesians, please consult IDN101030.E of 28 March 2006.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

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#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Publication:** *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*. 2005. Edited by Tim Lindsey and Helen Pausacker.

**Oral sources:** Two oral sources did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sources, including:** *Asian Ethnicity*, Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), Minority Rights Group International, Statistics Indonesia (BPS), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Resource Information Center, United States Department of State.

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